THE ROLE OF THE FATHER IN CHILDREN'S SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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INTRODUCTION

Background

Modern American society has recently been confronted with the need to examine the importance of the father in child development. This need has developed from many social changes, but primarily from the dramatic rise of women in the out-of-home workforce. Reports have indicated that nearly 75% of the mothers of school-age children are employed outside of the home (DelCampo, 1994). This dramatic rise blurs the traditional division between maternal and paternal childrearing roles. This division, which was formed during the Industrial Age as economic change led fathers to work outside of the home, maintains that fathers are the breadwinners and are secondary to their wives in the rearing of their children (Griswold, 1993). But as more mothers have become full-time financial providers as well, the father's role is now less defined. Many people argue this change gives fathers the opportunity to be more involved in rearing their children, but studies have yet to show that fathers have increased their childcare responsibilities, even when their wives work full-time (Amato, 1994; Hochschild, 1989; McBride & Mills, 1993).

Hochschild (1989) describes this history of American fatherhood in three stages. She theorizes that changes in fatherhood patterns have been a response to economic shifts beginning in the "agrarian stage." During this stage, fathers' roles focused on rearing boys to work on the family farm, while mothers raised the girls. Then, as vocational opportunities shifted away from family life during the nineteenth century, fathers took on a more distant and formal role in their children's lives, leaving most of the childcare responsibility to mothers. Currently, as so many women are working outside the home,

"culture [has rediscovered] the father as an active presence at home" (Hochschild, 1989, p. 186). Hochschild (1989) asserts, however, that while most families are in the third stage of economic change, very few have moved past the second stage of fatherhood. In other words, despite the change in many mothers' availability in the home, few fathers have taken on an active parenting role.

The historic lack of emphasis on the importance of father's role in child rearing can perhaps explain the hesitancy of some fathers to increase their participation in their children's care. Factors such as motivation, skills, self-confidence, and support seem to affect the extent of paternal involvement (Lamb & Oppenheim, 1989). However, scientific research on this issue has only recently begun, as scientists are just beginning to explore the father's role in child development. Results of these studies have been both positive and negative regarding the possibilities of fathers' contributions. One body of research maintains that fathers contribute little to their children's development beyond their economic needs (Amato, 1994). While these findings have been debated, researchers have struggled to find a method for examining the father-child relationship separate from the mother-child relationship. On the other hand, research has shown that fathers often positively influence their children's intellectual development (Williams & Radin, 1993) and moral development (Hoffman, 1981). Fathers have also been shown to be influential in sex role development, particularly among boys (Biller, 1981). Beyond these areas, research on paternal influences in social-emotional development has been limited. Some focus has been placed on the father-infant attachment and adult relationships in this regard, but little emphasis has been placed on early childhood (Lamb, 1981). This leaves the following

question unanswered: how does the quality of the father-child relationship affect the social-emotional development of the school-age child?

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to add to the limited amount of literature on the father's role in young children's social-emotional development. Because this area of development appears to be the most removed from what is considered fathers' strengths in child rearing, further investigation of how children's social-emotional development will be affected by increased paternal involvement is warranted. The present study predicts there is a positive relationship between the level of paternal involvement and the child's social-emotional development, specifically in the areas of perceived self-competence, social acceptance, and internalizing and externalizing behavior.

Chapter II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

The review of literature that follows will begin with an investigation into social-learning theory, which is the conceptual framework used within this study. Literature will also be examined that focuses on the amount of paternal involvement in dual-career families, as well as findings of possible effects of paternal involvement on children.

Conceptual Framework

Social learning theory has generated the greatest impact on research regarding the role of the father in his child's social-emotional development (Lamb, 1981). This model's guiding belief is that personality is learned through socialization (Miller, 1993). Socialization is the process of teaching children to behave as ideal adults in society. One method of teaching such behavior is through operant conditioning, or trial and error in which behaviors are either rewarded and repeated or punished and stopped. However, social learning theory asserts that imitation is the more common way in which behaviors are learned. Children observe behavior of others, imitate it, and are then reinforced to either repeat or not repeat it. Models who are rewarding, with either high status, competence, or power, are more likely to be imitated. For example, studies have found that fathers who are more nurturing are more likely to have young sons that model them and internalize their modes of thinking and problem solving (Radin, 1981). These rewarding fathers are a more influential source of observational learning for their sons than the less reassuring fathers.

Vicarious reinforcement is another means by which models serve as influential in the development of socialized behavior (Bandura, 1969). Vicarious reinforcement is the

process of observational learning in which individuals observe models being rewarded or punished for certain behaviors, and learn through their experiences rather than through experiencing the reinforcement directly. Thus, models can be exceedingly valuable in both the teaching of new behaviors, and the encouragement or discouragement to inhibit behaviors (Miller, 1993).

Also relevant to paternal influences in the learning of complex behaviors is the concept of self-efficacy. Bandura (1969) uses this term to describe individuals' perception of their competence in dealing with their environment. It is a step in information-processing that occurs after individuals have been exposed to observed behavior and determines whether they will be motivated to imitate the behavior. In other words, self-efficacy determines whether individuals feel confident that they are capable of performing a learned behavior. Bandura recommends that judgments of efficacy should be slightly overestimated in order to motivate children to try somewhat challenging tasks that will strengthen present skills. Furthermore, Bandura suggests that adults reward children in a manner that will increase their intrinsic interest in an activity. This can be accomplished through rewarding children for achieving a level of competence which will increase their feelings of efficacy, increase the value they place on the activity, and thereby increase their interest. Finally, although most judgments of self-efficacy are formed as a result of success and failure, adults can enhance efficacy through verbal persuasion, through serving as vicarious models of success with which children can identify, and through modeling new coping strategies (Miller, 1993).

In sum, social learning theory offers several means by which fathers' involvement can affect children's social-emotional development. Involved fathers can serve as valued

models from which children can learn appropriate behaviors. They can strengthen children's inhibitions of negative behavior through rewards and punishments. They can also enhance children's sense of self-efficacy, and thereby increase the likelihood of their imitating complex learned behaviors.

The Amount of Paternal Involvement in Dual-Career Families

Prior to the late 1970s, most research on parent-child relationships focused on mothers as the dominant influence on child development, while fathers were thought to play a less prominent role (Zaslow, Rabinovich, & Suwalsky, 1991). However, societal changes during the past several years, especially as women have entered the out-of-home workforce, have demanded that fathers play a more active role in child rearing tasks (Darling-Fisher & Tiedje, 1990; Marsiglio, 1991; LaRossa, Gordon, Wilson, Bavian, & Jaret, 1991). Yet, despite these changing demands, father involvement still remains disproportionate to that of mothers. Darling-Fisher and Tiedje (1990) found that fathers of 9-month-old infants whose wives worked full-time were more involved than those whose wives did not work full-time, but they maintained significantly less responsibility than their wives. Another study of 1,465 men with children from birth to age eighteen found that the amount of father involvement could not be reliably predicted by maternal employment, suggesting that men may not adjust their levels of involvement to compensate for mothers working outside the home (Marsiglio, 1991).

A crucial point to research on paternal involvement has been the absence of a clear and consistent definition as to what constitutes involvement (Marsiglio, 1991). Recent societal changes have outdated the traditional definition of the father's role being that of breadwinner and source of maternal support. Lamb, Pleck, Charnov, and Levine (1987)

proposed a three-part model of involvement that attempts to address this issue. Categories of parental involvement include interaction, accessibility, and responsibility. Interaction is defined as the parent and child interacting one-on-one and involves four subcategories, those of play, functional, parallel, and transitional interaction. Play is defined as the parent and child engaging in an activity together, such as playing a game, and is not the parent watching the child play. Functional interaction involves the parent assisting the child in some activity the child cannot perform alone. Parallel interaction is defined as the parent and child interacting periodically and being in close proximity to each other, although they are not engaged in the same activity. Transitional interaction occurs when the parent assists the child in moving from one activity or location to another.

Accessibility, the second category in Lamb et al.'s 1987 model, is described as the parent being physically and psychologically available to the child, but not necessarily interacting or involved in the same activity. The final category is responsibility, described by the parent assuming responsibility for the care and welfare of the child. Responsibility may include making doctors' appointments, arranging child care, or buying school supplies, but does not include financial responsibility. This category has been suggested as the most important type of involvement (Lamb, 1986), but the category in which fewest fathers participate (McBride & Mills, 1993). In fact, Lamb et al. (1987) report that dual-career fathers spend about 33 percent of the time that mothers do in direct interaction and 65 percent of the time that mothers do being accessible to their children, compared to a 20 and 25 percent difference in involvement among sole-providing fathers, respectively. Neither fathers from dual-career families nor single-career families demonstrate measurable involvement in the responsibility category. Lamb et al. (1987) go further to report that the

increase in the percentages of involvement among dual-career fathers actually reflect a drop in the amount of interaction and accessibility of mothers, rather than a substantial increase among fathers. A 1993 study by McBride and Mills reveals that paternal participation patterns have not changed significantly in recent years, despite continual increases in maternal employment. Furthermore, McBride and Mills (1993) report that mothers remain the primary caretakers of the children as their interactions are significantly more functional, while fathers' interactions are more often play activities. Both mothers and fathers continue to agree that fathers' participation is limited in responsibility, suggesting the continuing pattern of mothers as caretakers and fathers as playmates. However, dual-earner fathers in this study did report taking a greater responsibility in their parent-child interactions during weekdays than single-earner fathers.

Gender differences among children have also been noted as a factor related to father involvement. Huston (1983) reviewed several studies to find that fathers were more likely to be involved with sons than daughters. Possible explanations for this finding include the societal belief that fathers should be models for their sons and should take responsibility for gender-role socialization, teaching skills, and sharing masculine interests. Interestingly, Crouter & Crowley (1990) found that while this division holds true for many single-earner families, relations among fathers and children in dual-earner families are more egalitarian. Possible explanations for this phenomenon include the more traditional gender role attitudes of the single-earner fathers in the sample, or the possibility that mothers in single-earner families were "gatekeepers" of father and daughter interactions, as they kept daughters involved in more domestic activities (Crouter & Crowley, 1990).

The mother as "gatekeeper" explanation for differences in paternal involvement seems to be among the many possible correlates that determine paternal involvement. Researchers have also suggested that as society has begun to change its expectations of the paternal role, it has not prepared fathers to properly meet these changing expectations (McBride & Darragh, 1995). In their analysis of families with high-father involvement (HFI) and low-father involvement (LFI), McBride and Darragh (1995) report that HFI families have different attitudes and perceptions toward the role of the father than do LFI families, expecting that fathers should and can play integral roles in their children's lives. Lamb, Pleck, and Levine (1986) describe this factor as motivation. Survey data suggests that many males feel that it is unmanly to be involved in childcare. And while social changes, such as the women's movement, have changed this attitude to some degree, it remains a belief among enough men that it continues to play a role in their motivation to become involved fathers. Furthermore, just as support systems play an influential role in mother-child relations and maternal functioning, HFI mothers report the same to be true for their husbands. The reality that men do not have the same parental support systems in place that most women do may largely explain why father involvement remains minimal, despite changing societal expectations (Levant, 1988). Similarly, the McBride and Darragh (1995) study reports that HFI groups complain that a lack of strong paternal role models, and a lack of male socialization to be parents are both major barriers to father involvement. Finally, the study reveals that HFI mothers note that women can play a major role in discouraging involvement by not serving as a support system, expecting the father to parent the way she does, and serving again as "gatekeepers" to paternal involvement (McBride & Darragh,

1995, p.496). The final determinants of the amount of father-child involvement are feelings of self-confidence and skills. Biller (1993) emphasizes the need for fathers to feel confident in their ability to contribute to their children's development. Many motivated fathers are not involved because they do not have confidence in their skills to take proper care of children (Lamb et al, 1986.). Whether they lack role models or have not spent the same amount of time as mothers developing those skills, fathers who do not feel confident about their childcare abilities are less likely to be highly involved (Lamb et al., 1986).

Summary

While there has been some increase in the amount of paternal involvement among dual-career families in recent years, most studies have found relatively few changes in both the types and amounts of father-child interactions. Mothers continue to perform most of the functional childcare tasks, while fathers tend to interact through play activities. Gender differences do exist, in that fathers tend to be more involved with sons than daughters, although some studies have found father-child relations to be more egalitarian in dual-career families. Factors that may influence the level of fathers' involvement include attitudes and perceptions of fatherhood, support systems, lack of role models, and lack of confidence in skills.

Effects of Paternal Involvement on Child Development

Most researchers will agree that girls and boys develop best when they have the advantage of two positively involved parents (Biller, 1993). But with specific regard to the father-child relationship, research has shown fathers can positively influence their child's intellectual development (Williams & Radin, 1993) and moral development (Hoffman, 1981). Fathers have also been shown to be influential in sex role development, particularly

among boys (Biller, 1981). In adulthood, paternal involvement has been associated positively with both male and female occupational and educational mobility (Amato, 1994).

More specifically, in an 11-year follow-up study of 32 white, middle-class, intact families, Williams and Radin (1993) found that children whose fathers were highly involved when their children were 3-5 and 7-9 years old were more likely in adolescence to expect to attend graduate school. The researchers used the Paternal Involvement in Child Care Index (PICCI) to divide the sample into groups of low, medium, and high paternal participation when children were preschoolers and school aged. They also considered the mothers' employment status as a factor in the children's academic achievement and found mothers' part-time employment to be associated with their children's high grades and desire to go to graduate or professional school. In addition, while Williams and Radin (1993) found gender differences associated with academic achievement and timing of maternal part-time employment, they did not find gender differences among levels of paternal involvement.

With regard to sex role development, fathers have been shown to have a strong effect on the development of both masculine and feminine characteristics among their children (Biller, 1981). The development of masculine traits among boys is suggested to be a result of identification with the father, while feminine traits among girls are the result of positive reinforcement for feminine behavior. However, as part of the same 11 year follow-up study described above, Williams, Radin, and Allegro (1992) did indicate that the development of these traits may be less pronounced among older teenagers whose fathers were highly involved when the children were preschoolers. High father involvement when the children were preschoolers was found to be predictive of teenagers' nontraditional views regarding

employment. High father involvement when the children were school-aged was predictive of older adolescents' more nontraditional views concerning childcare roles.

Studies of the effects of father involvement on child development also suggest that involved, nurturing fathers are positively associated with the social competence, locus of control, and empathetic abilities of their children (Amato, 1994). Findings have also indicated that fathers' involvement at age six is related to more maturity in children's social development, and higher IQ and achievement at age seven (Gottfried et al., 1988). The Radin (1981) study of highly involved fathers found that children aged 3-5 years in these families scored higher on verbal ability measures and more strongly believed in their ability to control events than children in more traditional families.

Of particular interest to the present study is how paternal involvement factors affect the child's development of self-esteem or self-competence. The limited research that has focused specifically on these issues indicate that closeness with the father is an important factor in fostering self-esteem and confidence, while paternal deprivation has been associated with feelings of personal insecurity and poor self-concept (Biller, 1993).

Child Behavior and Paternal Involvement

Research specifically focusing on paternal effects on child behavior has suggested that fathers have an impact that is distinct from mothers. For instance, MacDonald and Parke (1984) studied how observed parent-child play interactions compared to children's competence with preschool peers. They were able to differentiate patterns in paternal and maternal behavior that were associated with sons' and daughters' social competence. Paternal directiveness was negatively associated with popularity for boys and girls, while the opposite was true for maternal directiveness and girls. Paternal physical play was also

associated with positive peer relations.

Similarly, Peery, Jensen, and Adams (1985) studied 120 preschool children to find a possible link between peer rejection and acceptance and their parents' attitudes regarding child rearing. Children who were identified by their peers as rejected or isolated tended to have mothers with low self-confidence and a belief in the patriarchal structure of their family. Their fathers saw child-rearing as the mothers' duty and disliked their children's intrusive behavior. Thus, although the fathers of these children were involved, their parenting attitudes were low in child orientation. In contrast, fathers of children who were considered popular among peers reported high child orientation and acceptance of children's intrusive behavior.

Another issue of considerable importance to fathers and child behavior is the concordance of mothers and fathers ratings of child behavior. Several studies have indicated a discrepancy between paternal and maternal ratings of child behavior (Greenberger & O'Neil, 1992; LeBlanc & Reynolds, 1989). In a comparison of mothers' and fathers' ratings of clinically referred children on the Child Behavior Checklist, moderate agreement was found with a median r across the subscales at .66 (Achenbach & Edelbrock, 1983). A similar finding was discovered among a sample of gifted students (LeBlanc & Reynolds, 1989). In addition, mothers in this study tended to report more problem behaviors for both sons and daughters, with the highest correlations among the most "externalizing" behaviors, such as delinquent, hyperactive, and aggressive scales, particularly among boys. Possible reasons for the prevalent discrepancies include the suggestion that children behave differently with each parent or the possibility that one parent perceives the child inaccurately (McMahon,1984; Achenbach & Edelbrock, 1983).

Webster-Stratton (1988) offered another possible explanation in her study comparing parental perceptions of child deviance to parent personal adjustment, suggesting a gender difference in how parents react to child behavior. This study used multiple measures of personal adjustment to compare parents' responses to measures of child behavior. Webster-Stratton found that while fathers' reports were highly correlated to teachers' reports, particularly among externalizing behaviors, mothers' and fathers' reports often were significantly different. Furthermore, while fathers' scores did not reflect personal adjustment measures, mothers who were depressed or troubled by marital problems reported more deviant behaviors among their children, and were more critical and commanding during parent-child interactions. In contrast, in a study of how different levels of maternal employment affect child development, Greenberger and O'Neil (1992) found that fathers of 5 and 6 year olds rated more problem behaviors when mothers worked full time than when mothers worked part time or at home. Furthermore, fathers ratings were least similar to teacher ratings when mothers worked full-time and most similar when mothers worked part-time or at home. The authors hypothesize that the combination of these findings suggest that fathers' reports may be influenced by feelings of frustration and dissatisfaction about the increased responsibility and demands that accompany mothers' full time employment. The fathers may be "overstating" their child's problem behaviors as a result of their feelings of increased stress and discord; a perspective that is supported by the decrease in concordance of father-teacher ratings when mothers work full time.

Another interpretation of the results of specific importance to the current study concerns how the amount of time spent with the child affects parent reports of child behavior. Greenberger and O'Neil (1992) also suggest that because full time maternal employment

leads to some level of increased paternal involvement, these fathers may simply be exposed to a wider variety of their child's behavior, including the more problematic ones. Thus, greater involvement leads to a more accurate depiction of child behavior. This leads to the question of the current study; namely, as the time parents spend with their children becomes more balanced, how is the concordance of mothers' and fathers' ratings of behavior affected? In an attempt to answer this question, Fitzgerald, Zucker, Maguin, and Reider (1994) used multiple measures of child behavior, including the Child Behavior Checklist Aggression score, among the parents of 107 3-5 year-old boys who were at risk for the development of substance abuse and anti-social behavior. When they compared parent ratings to the amount of contact parents had with their children, they found that fathers who spent the most time with their children perceived them most similarly to the way mothers perceived them. Although the CBCL scores did not produce significant differences, they did follow this pattern, while the correlations of the other behavior measures were significant, and suggested that indeed, time spent with children is related to the concordance of parents' reports of behavior.

Summary

Most studies of the effects of paternal involvement on child development do indicate that fathers offer a distinct and independent contribution. Children of highly involved fathers do tend to benefit from greater academic expectations, more flexible attitudes regarding employment opportunities and childcare roles, and greater social competence. Furthermore, as paternal involvement increases, parental reports of child behavior tend to become more similar, with the possible advantage of more accurate and unbiased assessments used in clinical and educational settings.

Hypotheses

Based upon previous research findings and the above theories, the following hypotheses have been drawn about how levels of father involvement relates to behavior ratings and reported self-competence of 5 and 6 year old children.

1. Children whose fathers are more involved will be reported by mothers to have fewer behavioral problems than children whose fathers are less involved;

2. Children whose fathers are more involved will be reported by fathers to have more behavioral problems than children whose fathers are less involved;

3. Children whose fathers are more involved will report stronger feelings of self-competence and social acceptance than children whose fathers are less involved;

4. Couples for which mothers' and fathers' perceptions of father involvement are more concordant will rate their children's behavior more similarly than couples for which there is less concordance.

Chapter III

METHODOLOGY

Participants

The sample consisted of 25 kindergarten and first-grade children from intact, dual-career families, and their parents. Their participation was obtained through either the parents' response to flyers distributed in children's public school classes or through their after-school care program.

Among the children participating in this project, 7 were in kindergarten and 18 were in the first-grade. Five of the children were 5 years old, 9 were 6 years old, and 11 were 7 years old. The mean for children's ages was 6.2 (SD = 0.80). Fifteen were male, and 10 were female. Seven of the children had no siblings, 17 of the children had one sibling, and 1 child had two siblings. With regard to birth order, 17 were first born children, and 8 were second born.

Fathers in this sample ranged in age from 28-47, with a mean age of 37.4. Mothers ranged in age from 27-43, with a mean of 35.6. The mean for number of years the couple had been married was 10.7. Twenty-four of the mothers and fathers labeled themselves as Caucasian, while one mother and one father (not a couple) labeled themselves as Native American.

The participants' socio-economic status was reported as predominantly middle class or upper-middle class, and all participants lived in a middle-sized midwest town or in its suburbs. Two of the fathers were high school graduates, one father had earned his GED, and 22 of the fathers had either attended or graduated from college. Among the mothers, 7 were high school graduates, and 18 had attended or graduated from college. All of the

parents in this study worked at least 30 hours per week, while fathers worked an average of 47.0 hours, and mothers worked an average of 40.2.

Procedure

Each father was asked to complete the Paternal Involvement and Child Care Index (PICCI; Radin, 1981) and the Child Behavior Checklist/ 4-16 (CBCL; Achenbach, 1991). Each mother was asked to complete both measures as well, taking note that she was to complete the PICCI as it applied to her husband's involvement with their child. At the same time, the researcher, blind to the level of paternal involvement and behavior problems, administered the Pictorial Scale of Perceived Competence and Social Acceptance for Young Children (Harter & Pike, 1984) to the child. All measures were completed in 30-45 minutes.

Measures

Paternal Involvement and Child Care Index (PICCI)

The PICCI was used as a measure of the amount of paternal involvement in the family's care of the child. Radin (1981) developed the PICCI to assess the levels of paternal involvement in five areas: the general statement of involvement, child care responsibilities, socialization responsibilities, influence in child rearing decisions, and availability. The instrument contains 23 items, several of which are scored on a Likert-type scale, and others ask parents to determine their percentage of child care responsibility. Three total scores are calculated employing responses to this instrument. There were Mother's Total Score for Father Involvement, Father's Total Score for Father Involvement, and a Grand Total Score of Father Involvement. The Grand Total Score of Father Involvement is the result of adding the Father's Total Score to the Mother's Total Score, both of which are calculated

based on a standard procedure developed by Radin. The possible range for Father's and Mother's Total Score is 5-72. The possible range for the Grand Total Score is 10-144. Higher scores indicate more father involvement (see Table 1).

Test-retest reliability correlation coefficients have ranged from $\underline{r} = .60$ to $\underline{r} = .99$ (Ahmeduzzaman & Roopnarine, 1992). The concurrent validity of the instrument was demonstrated by a study of 59 families of preschoolers with varied quantities of paternal involvement. For families with boys, the correlation was $\underline{r} = .81$ and $\underline{r} = .80$ at time 1 and time 2. For families with girls, the correlation was $\underline{r} = .75$ and $\underline{r} = .80$ at time 1 and time 2 (Radin & Goldsmith, 1983). All of the correlations were significant at the .001 level.

Child Behavior Checklist/4-16 (CBCL)

The CBCL/4-16 was used as a measure of the child's social-emotional development. Achenbach (1991) developed this widely used scale to assess the behavior problems and social competencies of children as reported by their parents. The CBCL consists of 112 three-point Likert scale questions and one open-ended question that ask the parent to describe various behavioral or emotional problems of the child. The instrument then divides the responses into several profiles, some of which can further be divided into Internalizing and Externalizing behavior problems. In this study, one subset of scores was used, namely those scores that fit either the Internalizing or Externalizing behavior problem categories. Internalizing behavior problems include the withdrawn, somatic complaints, and anxious/depressed profiles, while externalizing behavior problems include the delinquent and aggressive behavior profiles. The range of possible scores for Internalizing behaviors is 0-62, and the possible range for Externalizing scores is 0-76. Higher scores for both categories indicate more behavior problems (see Tables 2 and 3).

The CBCL was standardized on 2300 clinically referred children and 1300 nonreferred children (Nutall, 1992). One week test-retest reliability of a nonclinical sample scored at $\underline{r}$ = .95 for behavior problems and at $\underline{r}$ = .99 for social competencies (Nutall, 1992). After a three month period, these correlations were $\underline{r}$ = .84 and $\underline{r}$ = .97, respectively.

The Pictorial Scale of Perceived Competence and Social Acceptance

The perceived self-competence scale (Harter & Pike, 1984) was developed as a means of assessing young children's perceived self-competence along the dimensions of perceived competence and social acceptance, and was used in this study as a measure of social-emotional development. The conceptual framework of this measure maintains that self-concept is central to the adaptive functioning and well-being of the individual and should be measured as a multidimensional construct (Harter, 1988). For this reason, Harter breaks down the two domains of general competence and social acceptance into four subscales. General competence is characterized by cognitive competence and physical competence; social acceptance is divided into peer acceptance and maternal acceptance subscales. For this study, the less common paternal acceptance subscale was used rather than the maternal acceptance subscale. The paternal acceptance scale was published as a 1983 supplement to Harter and Pike's 1980 version of the Pictorial Scale of Perceived Competence and Social Acceptance.

The scale consists of six dichotomized descriptions of children performing tasks or conducting relationships along each of the four subscales (e.g. "This girl is really good at puzzles, but this girl is not so good at puzzles). Participants are read the description and then are asked to say which and how much of each dichotomy they associate with themselves. The total of the responses on each of the four subscales create the participants'

profile of perceived self-competence. The range of possible scores for each dichotomy is 6-24, with higher scores indicating more feelings of competence and acceptance (see Table 4).

Data Analysis

The SPSS computer analysis program was used to analyze the collected data. A one-tailed Pearson correlation coefficient was used to determine the relationships expressed in the four hypotheses.

Chapter IV

RESULTS

Four hypotheses were examined in this study. The section that follows will examine the frequencies of each variable, how each variable was analyzed, and report findings related to each hypothesis.

Means and standard deviations for perceptions of father involvement are presented in Table 1. The mean of fathers' perceptions of father involvement was 40.43, with a standard deviation of 6.13. The mean of mothers' perceptions of father involvement was 37.50, with a standard deviation of 7.58. Table 2 shows a mean of 3.72 for fathers' reports of internalizing behaviors among their children, with a standard deviation of 3.47, while the mean of their reports of externalizing behaviors was 9, with a standard deviation of 6.23. The means of mothers' ratings of internalizing and externalizing behaviors was 5.36 and 9.72, respectively, with standard deviations of 4.08 and 7.25. Table 4 shows that the means of children's reports of competencies as 21.24 (SD = 2.11) for cognition and 20.20 (SD = 2.04) for physical competence. Table 4 also shows that the means of children's reports of social acceptance in this were 19.28 (SD = 2.23) for peers and 17.44 (SD = 3.31) for fathers.

Hypothesis 1. Children whose fathers are more involved will be reported by mothers to have fewer behavioral problems than children whose fathers are less involved.
The variables used to test this hypothesis were the PICCI Father's Total Score for father involvement, the PICCI Mother's Total Score for father involvement, the PICCI Grand Total score of father involvement, and the mothers' CBCL ratings of both internalizing and externalizing behavior problems. In support of the hypothesis, Pearson correlation coefficient calculations found a significant negative correlation between PICCI Mother's

Total Score for father involvement and mothers' CBCL ratings of externalizing behaviors (r = -.53, $p < .01$). The Grand Total PICCI scores were also significantly related to mothers' CBCL externalizing behavior ratings ($r = -.41$, $p < .05$). Contrary to predictions, mothers' ratings of internalizing behavior problems were found to be positively related to PICCI Father's Total scores for father involvement and Grand Total PICCI scores ($r = .36$, $p < .05$; $r = .20$). No other significant correlations were found among these variables, although all PICCI scores did follow the same pattern of being positively related to mothers' ratings of internalizing behaviors, and being negatively related to mothers' ratings of externalizing behaviors (see Table 5).

Hypothesis 2. Children whose fathers are more involved will be reported by fathers to have more behavior problems than children whose fathers are less involved.

The variables used to test this hypothesis include the PICCI Father's Total Score for father involvement, the PICCI Mother's Total Score for father involvement, the PICCI Grand Total score of father involvement, and the fathers' CBCL ratings of internalizing and externalizing behavior problems. Contrary to predictions, Pearson correlation coefficient calculations found significant negative correlations between the PICCI Mother's Total Score for father involvement and PICCI Grand Total Score for father involvement and fathers' CBCL ratings of externalizing behaviors ($r = -.50$, $p < .01$; $r = -.40$, $p < .05$, respectively). PICCI Father's Total Scores for father involvement were negatively related to CBCL externalizing behavior ratings as well, although they were not significant. None of the PICCI scores was significantly related to fathers' CBCL ratings of internalizing behavior, although they were related in the expected, positive direction (see Table 6).

Hypothesis 3. Children whose fathers are more involved will report stronger feelings of self-competence and social acceptance than children whose fathers are less involved.

The variables used to test this hypothesis included the PICCI Father's Total Score for father involvement, the PICCI Mother's Total Score for father involvement, and the PICCI Grand Total score of father involvement, as well as the children's reports of cognitive competence, physical competence, peer acceptance, and paternal acceptance. As expected, a significant positive correlation was found between the children's reports of paternal acceptance and the PICCI Mother's Total Scores for father involvement ($r = .71$, $p < .001$). A significant positive correlation was also found between children's reports of paternal acceptance and the PICCI Grand Total Scores for father involvement ($r = .61$, $p < .001$). Fathers scores followed the same pattern, although the findings were not significant. No other significant correlations were found among the PICCI scores and the subscales of cognitive competence, physical competence, and peer acceptance. However, all PICCI scores were negatively related to the children's reports of peer acceptance (see Table 7).

Hypothesis 4. Couples for which mothers' and fathers' perceptions of father involvement is more concordant will rate their children's behavior more concordantly than couples for which there is less concordance.

The variables used to test this hypothesis included a differential computation of the PICCI Father's Total Score for father involvement and the PICCI Mother's Total Score for father involvement, and a differential computation of mothers' and fathers' CBCL ratings of internalizing and externalizing behavior problems. In each case the differential was computed by taking the absolute value of the difference between the fathers' CBCL scores and the mothers' CBCL scores. No significant correlation coefficients were found among

these variables, although the concordance of mothers' and fathers' internalizing behavior ratings were positively related to the concordance of mothers' and fathers' perceptions of father involvement, as expected (see Table 8).

Table 1
Means and Standard Deviations of Perceptions of Father Involvement (PICCI)

Variable	Possible Range	Observed Range	Observed M	Observed SD
Fathers' PICCI	5-72	31.70-63.00	40.43	6.13
Mothers' PICCI	5-72	22.86-48.00	37.50	7.58
Grand Total PICCI	10-144	56.91-109.40	78.00	12.03

Table 2
Means and Standard Deviations of Fathers' Ratings of Behavior Problems

Variable	Possible Range	Observed Range	Observed M	Observed SD
Withdrawn	0-18	0-3	1.00	0.96
Somatic Complaints	0-18	0-5	0.56	1.08
Anxious/Depressed	0-28	0-7	2.24	2.24
Total Internalizing	0-62	0-13	3.72	3.47
Delinquent	0-26	0-6	1.28	1.46
Aggressive	0-50	0-18	7.72	5.41
Total Externalizing	0-76	0-20	9.00	6.23

Table 3

Means and Standard Deviations of Mothers' Ratings of Behavior Problems

Variable	Possible Range	Observed Range	Observed M	Observed SD
Withdrawn	0-18	0-4	1.48	1.42
Somatic Complaints	0-18	0-7	0.88	1.74
Anxious/Depressed	0-28	0-8	3.12	2.45
Total Internalizing	0-62	0-14	5.36	4.08
Delinquent	0-26	0-5	1.48	1.39
Aggressive	0-50	0-20	8.24	6.11
Total Externalizing	0-76	0-25	9.72	7.25

Table 4

Means and Standard Deviations of Perceived Competence and Acceptance

Variable	Possible Range	Observed Range	Observed M	Observed SD
Cognitive Comp.	6-24	15-24	21.24	2.11
Physical Comp.	6-24	16-24	20.20	2.04
Peer Acceptance	6-24	15-23	19.28	2.23
Paternal Acceptance	6-24	13-23	17.44	3.31

Table 5

Hypothesis 1- Pearson Correlation Coefficients

	Mother's CBCL Ratings	
	Internal	External
Father PICCI	.36*	-.15
Mother PICCI	.02	-.53**
Grand Total PICCI	.20	-.41*

Note. *$p < .05$ **$p < .01$ ***$p < .001$

Table 6

Hypothesis 2- Pearson Correlation Coefficients

	Father's CBCL Ratings	
	Internal	External
Father PICCI	.25	-.16
Mother PICCI	.04	-.50**
Grand Total PICCI	.15	-.40*

Note. *p < .05 **p < .01 ***p < .001

Table 7

Hypothesis 3- Pearson Correlation Coefficients

	Cognitive Competence	Physical Competence	Peer Acceptance	Paternal Acceptance
Father PICCI	.16	.05	-.14	.33
Mother PICCI	-.09	-.18	-.09	.71***
Grand Total PICCI	.03	-.09	-.13	.61***

Note. *p < .05 **p < .01 ***p < .001

Table 8

Hypothesis 4- Pearson Correlation Coefficients

	Concordance of Mother and Father CBCL	
	Internalizing	Externalizing
Concordance PICCI	.05	-.20

Chapter V

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this project is to investigate the relationship between father involvement in dual-career intact families and children's social-emotional development, described by behavior ratings and perceived self-competence and social acceptance. The hypotheses were based upon reviewed literature. Results indicate some support for three of the four hypotheses. However, before any analysis of the results can be explored, several limitations of this study need to be addressed.

Most importantly, the sample size of this study is small, only 25 children and their families are included. The small sample size is due primarily to the limited number of families that could meet the criteria for inclusion in the study, namely kindergarten or first-grade children of intact, dual-career families. While such stringent criteria is necessary to create a balance for fathers' versus mothers' opportunities to be in direct contact with the child, as well as to control for developmental differences that accompany wide child age ranges, changes in American families, such as increases in single parent and blended families, have greatly diminished the number of "traditional" families in existence.

Other characteristics of this sample limit the scope of this study as well. The participants are predominantly Caucasian, middle-class, college-educated professionals. Only two of the participants are of another ethnicity (Native American), and none of the families' income is less than $24,000 per year. The similarities among the participants can be explained by the "snowballing" method of recruitment. Because of the small response rate to distributed flyers, the sample had to be built from friends of other participants. Furthermore, the couples in this study tend to work a high number of hours every week

(fathers' mean was 47 hours; mothers' mean was 40.2). Not only does this high amount of work limit the type of dual-career family being studied, this amount also suggests that these parents are very busy, and they do not have time to participate in a study, another factor affecting the sample size.

However, despite the limitations in the scope of this study, several significant findings can be reported. In reference to the hypothesis regarding more father involvement being associated with mothers' fewer reports of behavior problems, some evidence is supportive. Results indicate that mothers' and fathers' perceptions of father involvement are negatively related to mothers' reports of externalizing behavior problems. In other words, as parents perceived more father involvement in childcare, mothers reported fewer aggressive and delinquency behaviors of their children. These findings support McMahon's (1984) finding that mothers with less involved husbands tend to report more externalizing problem behaviors. However, significant findings for mothers' ratings of child's internalizing behaviors are positively associated with perceptions of father involvement. Reasons for this discrepancy may be that only externalizing behaviors are reduced or perceived by mothers to be reduced when fathers are more involved, or that the results are affected by the small sample size.

Results of the second hypothesis regarding more father involvement being associated to fathers' reports of more behavior problems are partially in the expected direction. Findings indicate that perceptions of more father involvement are associated with fewer father reports of externalizing behavior problems. These results do not corroborate Greenberger and O'Neil's (1992) finding that fathers report more behavior problems when mothers work full-time. However, more involved fathers did report more internalizing behavior problems,

as was expected, although these findings were not significant. Interestingly, mothers and fathers did follow the same patterns of rating behavior, in that more father involvement was associated with fewer externalizing behavior problems, but more internalizing behavior problems. However, these results were not tested for statistical significance. Reasons for this pattern are unknown, although they could be related to other variables such as gender, birth order, or the amount of parents' work hours. The size of this sample was to small to effectively draw such comparisons.

The third hypothesis regarding more father involvement being associated with children's perceptions of self-competence and social acceptance offers some possibly notable insights. Only mothers' and combined perceptions of father involvement were positively related to children's feelings of paternal acceptance. Fathers' perceptions of involvement, although they followed this direction, were not found to be significantly related to paternal acceptance in this study, suggesting that fathers' perceptions of involvement may be inflated. Fathers' perceptions of involvement are higher than mothers' perceptions ($\underline{M} = 40.4$ compared to $\underline{M} = 37.5$). Perhaps fathers are exaggerating how much they really are involved in their children's lives, and the children's perceptions of father acceptance are offering some measure as to whether the mothers' or fathers' perceptions are more accurate. However, because the paternal acceptance subscale of the Perceived Competence and Acceptance Scale is so rarely used, additional studies using this scale are needed to address this issue. A valuable addition to the current question would have been to use the more common maternal acceptance subscale as well, in order to establish a comparison between children's feelings of parental acceptance and levels of parental involvement.

Another notable finding is that only partial support of the third hypothesis is found. No significant correlations to paternal involvement are found among the other three subscales, namely cognitive competence, peer acceptance, and physical competence. Possible explanations for this lack of support may again be the small sample size or the relative advantages of education, wealth, and intact families that children in this sample face. Although more father involvement has been found to associated with academic achievement and positive peer relations (Williams & Radin, 1993; MacDonald & Parke, 1984), perhaps the more distinct factor is the *quality* of the father-child relationship, a factor that was not tested in the current study.

Finally, no evidence is found to support the hypothesis that concordance among mothers' and fathers' perceptions of father involvement is related to concordance among mothers' and fathers' ratings of child behavior. The theoretical basis for this hypothesis is that similar perceptions among parents regarding the division of childcare duties may indicate clear communication between parents regarding perceptions of child behavior. However, the more likely indicator of concordant perceptions of child behavior, supported through the literature, is the balance of actual levels of involvement, and not simply the perceptions. In other words, a couple may agree that mother embodies 70% of the childcare role and father embodies 30%, or vice versa, but that will not indicate an equal exposure to child behaviors, and as a result, equal behavior perceptions. On the other hand, if both parents share the childcare role at a more equal level, than they are more likely to see the child in the same light, and rate that child concordantly. This concordance becomes an important issue as researchers and clinicians are faced with the task of determining who can provide the most accurate information regarding the child's behaviors, and whether multiple

reports fog the child's true needs or clarify certain biases (LeBlanc & Reynolds, 1989). Unfortunately, the measures used in this study could not meaningfully and reliably determine that balance, nor was the sample size large enough to create an accurate depiction.

Recommendations

This study could be expanded in several directions once certain issues that hindered this study are addressed. First, as is the case among many researchers that use human participants, finding a sample is a challenging and exhaustive task. This study has also shown that involving an entire family, particularly fathers, into that fold magnifies the challenge tremendously. Also notable is the complication of finding a diverse group of participants to increase generalizability. To succeed in this challenge, researchers in the area of father involvement need to find a niche, perhaps a fathers' parenting group or men's club in which large groups of fathers may be tangible. Also, fathers must be made aware of the important benefits of such research. Adding to the evidence that involved fathers can and do make distinct, valuable, and equal contributions to their child's development could not only improve the nation's focus on the importance of families, but also lend fathers support in court battles over custody issues. Increasing awareness as to the importance of fathers also may offer motivation to fathers who currently play less central roles in their children's lives.

This inquiry into fathers' influence on behavior and self-competence and acceptance should also be expanded to other family types, including single-earner families, single parent families, and blended families, not to mention families of diverse ethnicity, socio-economic status, and ages. This study also only used the internalizing and externalizing

subset of scores from the CBCL/4-16. Notable insights may also be found in a more expansive analysis of the behavior problems as well as the scale's competencies scores.

Another meaningful addition to the topic of fathers and behavior is the inclusion of measures of the *quality* of the father-child relationship or fathers' parenting style as factors in child's behavior. This study does not predict actual behavior problems as associated with paternal involvement, because high involvement does not necessarily indicate the characteristics behind the parenting. A highly involved parent may be abusive, and how would that affect the child's behavior?

Conclusions

Again, the purpose of this study is to examine the role of father involvement in the social-emotional development of children. Hand-in-hand with this issue is how father involvement affects the whole family, including the mother's relationship with both father and child. In dual-career families, in which time is a limited, but precious commodity, everyone must work together to find a balance among roles and still provide for the growing needs of the child. The results of this study suggested some of the benefits of finding such a balance. Mothers in families in which father involvement is high may have a more positive outlook regarding their child's behavior, an outlook which benefits mother, child, and their relationship. Fathers who are highly involved may be more likely to notice the more subtle behavior problems that affect their children. This awareness does not necessarily mean that the children are actually displaying worse behavior, but maybe fathers know their children and their needs better, a situation that benefits the father, child, and their relationship. Finally, high father involvement may increase children's feelings of paternal acceptance, a factor which plays a role in the development of self-concept and esteem.

Father involvement is undoubtedly an important influence in child's development, both directly and indirectly, through the child's relationship with both parents. It is an area of concentration that has benefited from much focus in recent years, and deservedly so. However, many issues have yet to be fully addressed, and it is the role of family and child researchers to venture forward to one day gain a greater understanding into this once ambiguous relationship.

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APPENDIX

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW

Date: 10-29-96 **IRB#: HE-97-019**

Proposal Title: THE ROLE OF FATHER IN CHILDREN'S SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Principal Investigator(s): Rex E. Culp, Stephanie Schadle

Reviewed and Processed as: Expedited

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

ALL APPROVALS MAY BE SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY FULL INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD AT NEXT MEETING, AS WELL AS ARE SUBJECT TO MONITORING AT ANY TIME DURING THE APPROVAL PERIOD.
APPROVAL STATUS PERIOD VALID FOR ONE CALENDAR YEAR AFTER WHICH A CONTINUATION OR RENEWAL REQUEST IS REQUIRED TO BE SUBMITTED FOR BOARD APPROVAL.
ANY MODIFICATIONS TO APPROVED PROJECT MUST ALSO BE SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL.

Comments, Modifications/Conditions for Approval or Reasons for Deferral or Disapproval are as follows:

Signature: John H. Wyckoff Date: November 6, 1996

Chair of Institutional Review Board

VITA

Stephanie Schadle

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: THE ROLE OF FATHER IN CHILDREN'S SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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